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Preparations for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Letter dated 26 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (see annex), which the Group of 77 and China propose to use as the basis for the negotiations of the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action.

The document, which was adopted by the Small Island Developing States Ministers meeting in the Bahamas in January, was endorsed by the Group of 77 and China at its meeting at the Ambassadorial level on 4 March 2004. Comments and/or concerns that have been expressed or may be expressed by some members of the Group on the document will be taken into consideration during the negotiations which will be led by Jagdish D. Koonjul, Chairman of AOSIS, on behalf of the Group of 77.

In view of the very short time available during the preparations for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action, I have requested the Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth session to arrange for some informal meetings before the International Meeting to allow an initial exchange on the document.

I kindly request that the Strategy document be circulated as a document of the United Nations under the relevant agenda item of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, on the International Meeting, which will meet from 14 to 16 April as a preparatory meeting for the International Meeting to be held in Mauritius.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

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Annex to the letter dated 26 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Interregional Preparatory Meeting of Small Island Developing States for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States held in Nassau, Bahamas, 26 to 30 January 2004

AOSIS Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPOA

1. The Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) provides a blueprint for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the international community to address national sustainable development in SIDS that takes into account the economic, social and environmental aspects that are the pillars of the holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development. The BPOA sets out basic principles as well as specific actions that are required at the national, regional and international levels to support sustainable development in SIDS.

2. SIDS acknowledge that sustainable development is primarily a national responsibility, but also that for SIDS to succeed, given their acknowledged vulnerabilities, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must be given specific expression for SIDS by the international community. Furthermore, there is a need for strengthened cooperation and partnership at the national, regional and international levels. Such partnership should be broad-based and ensure involvement and participation of all stakeholders including civil society and the private sector.

3. SIDS have demonstrated their commitment to sustainable development by bearing the brunt of the cost of implementing the BPOA while at the same time meeting their increasing obligations under international agreements. While the international community has provided financing and technical assistance in sectors that were fairly new in 1994 (climate change, persistent organic pollutants) overall ODA to SIDS has declined by over 50% between 1994 and 2004. Furthermore, an analysis of the reports shows an increase in *ad hoc* stand-alone projects, rather than a programmed or strategic approach.

4. The review of the BPOA has provided SIDS with a valuable opportunity to measure progress in implementing its objectives. National assessment reports have been prepared, which in turn have informed the preparation of Regional Synthesis Reports. These documents, together with the BPOA, form the basis of the Strategy document and should be read along with this document in order to fully appreciate the work needed to ensure further progress.

5. SIDS are committed to eradicating poverty and improving the livelihoods of their peoples by the implementation of strategies which build resilience and capacity to address their uniquely disproportionate vulnerabilities. This can be facilitated by a multilateral framework that is more responsive to the particular needs of SIDS.

6. There is an urgent need for greater democracy, transparency and inclusiveness in the international financial and economic system to allow for the effective participation of SIDS in international financial decision-making processes and institutions, and in the process of setting international rules, codes, norms and standards.

7. Good governance at all levels that addresses, *inter alia*, economic, social and environmental security is essential for achieving sustainable development and for building resilience.

8. The current emphasis on security has resulted in the diversion of resources from the sustainable development agenda. Security must be viewed in a multi-dimensional fashion, including threats such as natural disasters, food security, water security, incidence of HIV/AIDS, narco-trafficking, illegal trade in small arms. There is a need for more international cooperation and technical and financial support to SIDS to face these threats, as the new obligations create particular difficulties for all SIDS, particularly those with large coastal areas and the archipelagic SIDS.

9. South-South cooperation is critical at the bilateral, sub regional and regional levels in strategic areas, such as information and communication technology, trade, investment, capacity building, disaster management, environment, food, agriculture, water, energy, health and education.

10. There is a need to avoid any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular women and children, that hinders their well-being or that creates obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights, including the right of everyone to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being and their right to food, medical care and the necessary social services.

11. SIDS acknowledge the role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Secretariat, through the Division for Sustainable Development and its Small Island Developing States Unit, in undertaking activities in both the preparatory processes and the International Meeting to enhance coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system, as well as with other relevant multilateral organizations, to ensure the effective implementation, monitoring and follow-up to the outcomes of the ten-year review of the Programme of Action. Similarly, SIDS acknowledge the role of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and look forward to its fulfilling its mandate to advocate strongly, in partnership with the relevant parts of the United Nations as well as with major groups, media, academia and foundations, for the mobilization of international support and resources for the successful outcome of the International Meeting, and for the follow-up to the outcomes of the ten-year review of the Programme of Action.

12. Experience has reaffirmed that sustainable development is best achieved through adoption of integrated and holistic approaches at all levels.

13. SIDS recognize the importance of culture in their sustainable development, as it represents the expression and identity of the people and the foundation of the richness of our cultural diversity, traditions and customs.

14. SIDS recognize the integral role of youth in sustainable development and express the need to further ensure their participation in programmes and activities related to sustainable development on SIDS.

15. SIDS reaffirm the importance of gender equality and promote the equal access of women and men to basic and higher education, to health care services, economic opportunity and decision making systems for sustainable development.

Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise

16. The adverse effects of climate change and sea-level rise continue to threaten the sustainable development, livelihoods and existence of SIDS. The failure of most industrialized countries to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions means that the vulnerability of SIDS will be increased and that adaptation to climate change continues to be a major priority for SIDS. To this end, the international community must:

a) fully implement the UNFCCC
b) ensure the immediate ratification and entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol
c) take further urgent action to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions, including through the development and increased use of renewable energy
d) support SIDS in the development and implementation of national climate change action plans.
e) remove barriers to the transfer to SIDS of appropriate technology related to SIDS.

17. Financial and technical support must be provided, particularly through the GEF, for the adoption of better adaptation strategies and action, not only for technical studies but also for the actual implementation of those plans. The GEF must apply their rules of access and simplify their disbursement procedures so as to take into account the special circumstances of SIDS.

18. Regional development banks and other financial institutions must assist SIDS to strengthen and broaden (or establish where necessary) regional and national climate change coordination mechanisms and the links between the two.

Natural and Environmental Disasters

19. SIDS being located among the most vulnerable regions in the world to the increasing intensity and frequency of natural and environmental disasters, face disproportionately high economic, social and environmental consequences. The following action is therefore required:

a) The international community must strengthen the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) as a dedicated facility to address national disaster mitigation, preparedness and early-warning capacity, and the mainstreaming of risk management into the national planning process.
b) The international community must use opportunities such as the 10-year review of the

Yokohama Strategy on Natural Disaster Reduction in 2005 to address the specific issues of SIDS including the possibility to put in place appropriate insurance and re-insurance arrangements for SIDS as they relate to natural and environmental disasters.

c) An easily accessible international fund, to be disbursed through regional and national structures, must be established by 2005.

d) The SIDS undertake to strengthen their respective national frameworks for more effective disaster management.

Waste Management

20. While some SIDS have made significant progress in both planning and implementation of waste management policies, programs and strategies, most countries have serious difficulties in terms of financial and technical capacity in dealing with waste management issues. There is a growing concern with the security and environmental implications of the disposal and transport of radioactive materials and the lack of adequate liability and compensation regimes. Marine debris, ballast waste and World War II shipwrecks pose several threats to the ecological integrity of SIDS. The following action is therefore required:

a) The international community must provide financial support by 2015 for the development, transfer and implementation of appropriate technologies that can be adapted by SIDS.

b) The control of the transboundary movement of hazardous waste must be strengthened, especially through the enhancement of activities under the Basel and Waigani Conventions. This must to include the principles of prior informed agreement, liability and compensation, the emergency fund and support for the regional centers.

c) The international community must assist SIDS to:
   i. identify cost-effective and environmentally sound waste management systems;
   ii. explore and engage in innovative financing of waste management infrastructure;
   iii. promote recycling, re-use and waste management initiatives;
   iv. establish national environmental trust funds; and
   iv. develop projects appropriate to SIDS for the use of waste as a resource, including for the production of energy as a waste management solutions.

d) There must be regional cooperation to reduce the quantity of waste disposed of at sea.

e) The IMO must expedite the process towards the elaboration and conclusion of a convention on ballast water.

f) Those nations whose naval vessels were sunk in SIDS territories during World War II must:
   a. act to ensure these vessels do not become a source of pollution; and
   b. accept liability for rehabilitation in the event that pollution occurs.

g) SIDS must implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, as appropriate, with support from the international community in particular UNEP, by undertaking initiatives specifically addressing the vulnerabilities of SIDS.

h) The transportation of radioactive materials in and through the SIDS regions must cease. Ongoing dialogue, including through the IMO, with the shipping states should be urgently strengthened towards that end.

Coastal and Marine Resources

21. SIDS are defined by their historic, cultural and economic links to the oceans and seas. The continue to be heavily dependent on their marine resources, particularly for the sustainable livelihood of coastal communities. The management of coastal and marine resources have become integrate into broader ocean management strategies since the entry into force of UNCLOS.

22. However, implementation of UNCLOS continues to be impeded by financial constraints and lack of capacity. To overcome these constraints, a financial mechanism must be established at th international level to provide further financial assistance to SIDS. In addition, those countries an institutions with the expertise to help must provide SIDS with the necessary financial and technic assistance to, among other things:

a) complete the delimitation of their maritime boundaries; and
b) submit any claims to the Continental Shelf Commission by November 2009.

23. The international community must assist SIDS to:

a) strengthen, or develop where necessary, national and regional fisheries managemer mechanisms
b) fully implement surveillance and monitoring systems;
c) obtain the necessary tools to analyze and assess the status of fish stocks; and
d) strengthen sustainable and responsible fisheries management.

24. Distant water fishing nations must provide SIDS with the financial and technical support require to establish more equitable and sustainable management of resources, and to ensure their support fo the sustainable development of SIDS in general.

25. In collaboration with other states and making use of regional mechanisms, SIDS will work to pu in place integrated policies, management approaches, such as marine protected areas, and develo national capacity to monitor, conserve and sustainably manage coral reefs and associated ecosystem SIDS should address as a priority the impacts of coastal development, coastal tourism, intensive an destructive fishing practices, pollution, as well as the unreported and illegal trade in corals, on th future health of coral reefs. To facilitate these initiatives, the international community must provid financial support for:

a) regional monitoring efforts and Global Ocean Observing System;
b) the strengthening, where appropriate, of networks of marine protected areas; and
c) activities to address the impact of mass coral bleaching.

26. The relevant regional and international development partners must support SIDS in th development and implementation of regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Islands Regional Ocea Policy, the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainabl development, the Ocean Governance Project involving all regions, and the establishment of relate initiatives in other SIDS regions.

Freshwater Resources

27. SIDS continue to face water management and water access challenges, caused in part by deficiencies in water availability, water catchment and storage, pollution of water resources, saline intrusion exacerbated *inter alia* by sea-level rise, and leakage in the delivery system. The access to safe water, the provision of sanitation and the promotion of hygiene are the foundations of human dignity, public health and economic and social development and are among the priorities for SIDS.

28. SIDS in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions have demonstrated their commitment to SIDS-SIDS cooperation with the Joint Programme for Action for Water and Climate, launched at the 3rd World Water Forum in March 2003. The international community must support the implementation of this programme, and the proposal to broaden it to all SIDS regions.

29. International financial institutions, regional development banks and the private sector must provide SIDS with financial and technical assistance to further develop, adapt and apply new and appropriate technologies, needed to meet the commitment in MDG-7, namely to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015.

30. The international community must provide assistance to SIDS for capacity-building for the development and further implementation of freshwater and sanitation programmes, and the promotion of integrated water resources management, including through the Global Environmental Facility focal areas and the World Water Assessment Programme, and through support to the GPA Coordination Office. The international community should therefore ensure full support of the global targets and initiatives around Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

31. The WMO, supported by the international community, must continue to implement actions to strengthen national capacity through the Hydrological Cycle Observation System (HYCOS) proposal and recommendations regarding water quality.

Land Resources

32. The pressures on land resources that existed ten years ago have only been exacerbated by competing uses, increased demands and land degradation.

33. The international community must assist SIDS to:

a) develop capacity to meet the various new international requirements, such as the WTO agreement on agriculture, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures (SPS), technical barriers to trade (TBT), and other standards and regulations,
b) strengthen land tenure and management systems
c) move from primary to tertiary agricultural production.

34. Given the recognition accorded to the special needs of SIDS at the UNCCD COP-6, SIDS are encouraged to present proposals for funding under the UNCCD and CBD, through the GEF. Taking into account that the GEF is the financial mechanism of both conventions, the GEF must facilitate SIDS access to GEF financial and technical resources to develop and implement projects to address land degradation.

35. Faced with the challenge of competitiveness, SIDS have to find opportunities to diversify thei economies and markets, especially in the agricultural sector, in order to increase their degree of foo security and self-reliance. The international community must assist SIDS in their efforts to:

a) create an enabling environment for agricultural intensification and diversification;
b) remove production constraints and build programmes in areas such as seed production an integrated pest management systems; and
c) enhance food processing, marketing and quality.

36. To elaborate concrete strategies to enhance efficient and sustainable agricultural production an ensure their food security, the UN system, and the FAO in particular, must provide practical support t SIDS, for research into such matters as: diversification of agriculture; alternative uses for crops improved husbandry, irrigation and water management; aquaculture; and use of appropriate moder technologies for smallholder agriculture, including agricultural extension services. SIDS-SID partnerships, as well as partnerships with development partners, should be developed to assis cooperative efforts towards improved techniques and diversification.

37. The 2005 FAO Conference of SIDS Ministers of Agriculture should consider endorsing priorit actions for an enhanced contribution of agriculture, forestry and fisheries to SIDS sustainabl development policies, in the light of the importance of nutrition and food security needs to SIDS.

38. The international community must assist SIDS to:

a) Increase awareness, promotion and the adoption and enforcement of legislation to ensure tha sustainable rotational logging practices and replanting initiatives are implemented;
b) Increase stakeholder participation in all discussions and negotiations regarding developmen management, and conservation of forest and tree resources;
c) Ensure adherence to national forest policies and legislation that has been developed t safeguard rights of resource 'owners' through administrative and management mechanisms fo alienation, licence or transfer of 'traditional rights' for commercial development purposes;
d) Develop and strengthen partnerships for sustainable forest management such as the Iwokram Rainforest Programme; and
e) In the area of forestry the international community must assist SIDS in their development an implementation of action plans to reduce the deforestation rate and promote sustainable fores management.

39. The international community must assist SIDS to improve national capacity for policy an legislation formulation, negotiations with transnational corporations and evaluation of mineral secto projects. This includes environmental impact assessment, compliance, rehabilitation reclamation an environmental bonds, and compensation.

40. In the mining sector the international community must assist SIDS to:

a) establish fair and transparent compensation systems that fully compensate all natural resourc loss (including water, forest, and land resources), environmental damage, recreational loss, an socio-cultural effects. This can be non-monetary as well as in monetary terms;

b) progress, legislate, and manage national mineral policy frameworks and environmental management plans;
c) facilitate institutional capacity in SIDS to deal with mining tenement issues, mine company selection, closure, institutional weaknesses, environmental issues related to mining and raising of land 'owner' awareness; and
d) develop regional mineral databases, assess and evaluate mineral and aggregate resources.

Energy Resources

41. Energy dependence is a major source of economic vulnerability for many SIDS, and many remote and rural SIDS communities have little or no access to modern and affordable energy services. Modern research has produced commercially feasible options of energy supply, such as wind, solar and ocean energy. Indeed, many SIDS are particularly suited to these options because of their geographical location. However, existing technologies may not be adaptable to the needs and circumstances of many SIDS communities.

42. The international community must support the development of a comprehensive assessment of the energy resources and the current and projected patterns of energy use, and assist in the identification and development of renewable energy that is affordable and readily adaptable to the special circumstances of SIDS. The international community, including the regional development banks, must assist in this process, in particular as regards support for technology transfer and the actual implementation of projects for renewable energy and energy efficiency in SIDS.

43. The international community and regional organisations, and development partners must contribute actively to the implementation of such energy policies and the promotion of demonstration projects. In support of the target of JPOI for strengthening ongoing and supporting new efforts on energy supply and services by 2004, the international community must also make a renewed effort to ensure that SIDS can achieve real and demonstrable progress in this regard, for review by CSD in 2006, in accordance with its work programme.

44. Existing mechanisms, such as the UN Renewable Energy Fund, must be significantly strengthened to ensure greater dissemination and application of SIDS-appropriate technology. The international community must support SIDS-SIDS cooperation in areas where success has been achieved, such as a collaborative agency for financing SIDS renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

Tourism Resources

45. Tourism is an important contributor to economic growth in SIDS. Yet it is recognised that the sector is open to many exogenous shocks. There is a continuing challenge to establish the appropriate balance between tourism development and that of other sectors of the economy, noting the limits of carrying capacity, as the tourism sector places demands on other sectors of the economy. There is a particular challenge to make appropriate linkages to other local service providers to retain resources within the country.

46. Regional and international tourism organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, must provide resources to ensure that tourism development and social and environmental management are mutually

supportive at all levels, through monitoring the impacts of tourism development. They must also facilitate the design or refinement of guidelines and best practices appropriate for assessing the carrying capacity for SIDS, including the provision of technical and financial support to conduct these assessments. To this end SIDS should develop partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.

47. Regional and international tourism organizations must also find effective ways and means to support SIDS in their effort to develop and implement sustainable tourism development plans, community-based initiatives on sustainable tourism, and to build the necessary capacities of civil society and local stakeholders in this regard, while protecting culture and traditions, and effectively conserving and managing natural resources.

Biodiversity Resources

48. Many SIDS have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and have initiated national biodiversity strategic action plans and developed national nature reserves and protected areas. WSSD confirmed the essential links between biodiversity and livelihoods. The achievements of the targets set by the international community in relevant international conventions in particular those of the CBD agreed by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD and endorsed by the WSSD are of particular importance to SIDS.

49. To achieve those targets in the agreed timeframes, the international community must assist SIDS by:

a) Building effective partnerships between all stakeholders essential to the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources;
b) Addressing island biodiversity under the CBD in a manner that responds to the unique characteristics of SIDS and to the threats related to climate change, land degradation and their particular vulnerabilities;
c) Ensuring that the CBD takes account of SIDS-specific cultural identities in the preparation of their final guidelines on tourism;
d) Supporting the implementation of a strong Programme of Work on Protected Areas and the establishment of a globally representative system of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas by 2012;
e) Controlling major pathways for potential alien invasive species in SIDS;
f) Developing local capacities for protecting and developing the traditional knowledge of indigenous groups for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources;
g) Developing the capacity to promote SIDS-SIDS cooperation for biodiversity resources, shared ecosystem management and exchange of experience;
h) Establish appropriate protocols and regulations to ensure that bio-piracy is discouraged and prevented;
i) Developing research facilities in biodiversity, including taxonomy, at the national and regional levels in SIDS; and
j) Supporting, through the CBD and its Cartagena Protocol, the development and implementation of national bio-safety frameworks.

50. Financial and technical support must be provided, particularly through the GEF, not only for technical studies but also for the actual implementation of plans. The GEF must apply their rules of access and simplify their disbursement procedures so as to take into account the special circumstances of SIDS. New and predictable sources of funding are also required, including through the establishment of National Biodiversity Trust Funds.

Transport and Communication

51. It is acknowledged that for SIDS transport and communication remain important challenges in the promotion and implementation of sustainable development nationally and in their regions. In the ten years since the Barbados Conference the two issues have diverged, and now require separate consideration.

52. In transportation, SIDS face constraints in other productive sectors due to inadequate international and domestic transport facilities and services. In this context, development partners must provide the necessary support, both financial and technical, for the development and management of the airports and ports in SIDS, including assistance in meeting the international requirements imposed as a consequence of new security issues.

53. Several SIDS participate in regional transportation arrangements. There is a continued need for rationalization of air services in SIDS regions. There is also a further need for consideration of improved land and sea transport policies for SIDS. International and regional organizations must support these activities.

54. While the liberalization of telecommunications in some SIDS has presented both opportunities and challenges, in many SIDS there are still serious access limitations to basic telecommunications. The small size of the markets has prevented maximisation of the full value of liberalization through economies of scale.

55. The international community must support SIDS in such initiatives as access to and the use of ICT, development of community multimedia centres, ICT literacy, skills development, local content and applications in building knowledge based societies and bridging the digital divide, particularly in rural communities. There is also a continuing need for maintenance of low-tech communication solutions such as HF radio for rural and remote locations. There must also be concerted action from the ITU, UNESCO, and other relevant organizations to support these activities. In this regard the WSIS must support SIDS concerns, and the international community must fully support State and non-State participation of SIDS in the WSIS.

56. SIDS need to move to further liberalize their telecommunications sector to address the high costs caused by existing monopoly service providers, and to seek further resolution of cost reduction measures from the international service providers through the WSIS process. Appropriate and adequate national communications regulatory frameworks will be required.

Science and Technology

57. It is recognized that science and technology is a cross-cutting issue for all sectors for SIDS sustainable development. Since 1994 some SIDS have been able to strengthen the science and technology base of their economy, while others still require significant support.

58. Targeted investments for SIDS appropriate science and technology capacity is critical, given the increasing importance of science and technology in building resilience in SIDS. The international community must increase its support for regional organizations in order to promote:

a) the incorporation in national sustainable development strategies of appropriate science and technology elements and support for science development in SIDS, while also providing promotion and protection for traditional science and technology which includes local and indigenous knowledge and management practices;
b) the review by SIDS of their science and technology activities in relation to environmentally sound and sustainable development
c) the reduction of environmental risk in the application of science and technology and in the utilization of indigenous technologies.

59. In furtherance of the above the international community must support the setting up of regional clearing house mechanisms for SIDS specific technologies. The existing mechanisms such as the regional SIDSNet could be used as a basis to build on.

60. The UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development must support these activities through dedicated research, and UNESCO and other UN agencies must support their implementation.

61. The strengthening and further development of SIDS-SIDS cooperation and experience sharing in this area is crucial and should be made a priority, especially in regard to utilizing the national and regional institutions of SIDS. An important activity in this regard is the operationalization of the SIDS Roster of Experts, and the SIDS Unit of UN DESA should seek to complete the necessary work by 2004 in cooperation with regional organizations and national governments.

62. SIDSNet is a critical mechanism in support of the sustainable development of SIDS. Adequate funding must be made available for its maintenance, strengthening and further enhancement. The French language portal must be fully operational by 2005. A Spanish language portal should be developed by 2005, and the SIDS Unit of UNDESA is requested to seek the necessary support.

Graduation of SIDS LDCs

63. SIDS remain deeply concerned with the issue of graduation of countries recognized as highly vulnerable to external shocks beyond their domestic control. The issue of graduation of SIDS classified as LDCs from that status is of immediate and critical concern. This concern is further exacerbated by the fact that at present only LDC SIDS are being considered for graduation and there is no agreed policy or process for 'smooth transition' to a path of sustainability for countries graduating from LDC status. The premature graduation of other SIDS from access to concessionary resources in institutions should also be reviewed with greater emphasis placed on their economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities.

64. Graduation from LDC status should not be contemplated unless application of the agreed methodology demonstrates that a country has made sustainable socio-economic progress, that the policy and process for a smooth transition have been accepted. All discussions on future graduations should be held in abeyance.

Trade: globalization and trade liberalization

65. Most SIDS, as a result of their smallness, persistent structural disadvantages and vulnerabilities, face enormous difficulties in integrating into the global economy. They will be further marginalized unless specific provisions are made for SIDS in the multilateral trading system. Trade liberalization, accompanied by erosion of trade preferences, is having severe consequences on their already fragile economies and social stability, health and education and will further deplete government revenue. These problems further exacerbate SIDS situation to the extent that they will face additional difficulties in attracting investment and in pursuing relevant trade and development policies.

66. The specific concerns of the SIDS have not yet been addressed by the WTO.
Efforts must be made to allow for the full and effective participation by SIDS in the deliberations and decision making process of the WTO. Many SIDS are either not represented in Geneva or are still grappling with the accession process to WTO membership. SIDS also experience serious capacity constraints in meeting the WTO obligations. The very limited membership of SIDS in WTO and of their under-representation in Geneva of Members makes it difficult for their effective participation in and defense of SIDS interests in the WTO.

67. In order to address SIDS concerns the following actions are required:

a) simplification and acceleration of accession procedures for SIDS in the WTO;
b) adoption of provisions within the WTO to facilitate a "smooth transition" for SIDS graduating from LDC status to reduce the likelihood of economic dislocation;
c) adoption by the WTO and other relevant international organizations of an integrated framework of technical assistance and cooperation for trade development in SIDS, including national capacity for more effective participation in trade negotiations;
d) provision within the WTO for policy spaces to enable SIDS to more effectively pursue their sustainable development goals;
e) expeditious completion by the WTO of its Work Programme on Small Economies, which must recognize and address the problems and concerns of SIDS;
f) recognition by the WTO for the maintenance of non-reciprocal preferences for SIDS;
g) provision by the WTO for flexibility for SIDS to enter into non-reciprocal preferential trading arrangements;
h) establishment by the main trading and development partners of SIDS of appropriate compensatory mechanisms and adjustment measures to cushion losses from erosion of preferences;
i) establishment by multilateral financial institutions of special long term financial mechanisms to facilitate the adjustment of SIDS to the post-Uruguay Round trading environment, as well as further adversities that they may encounter in the international trading environment, upon completion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations;

j) recognition by the WTO to maintain subsidy measures by SIDS in order to compensate for their inherent structural disadvantages in attracting investment; exemption by WTO of SIDS from the rules on subsidies that require the phasing out of existing fiscal incentives; creation of appropriate incentives by trading partners to induce their investors to invest in the economies of SIDS;

k) assistance from UNCTAD and other relevant institutions to SIDS to enhance their capacity for trade policy analysis and trade negotiations, including trough integrated assessments of the impacts of trade-related measures on key sectors such as agriculture and services, including tourism;

l) There is a need for greater attention to be given to the environmental dimensions of trade. There should be continued examination of the trade implications of the MEAs.

Sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development

68. SIDS continue to require support to address the serious challenges they face in capacity development in policy and strategy formulation and implementation. SIDS are now seeking to address these challenges in capacity through a more integrated approach that includes civil society and the private sector, noting that within the CARICOM region a charter has been established for the participation of all major groups.

69. All development partners including the UN system, and in particular the UNDP and UNEP, shall support SIDS in:

a) Ensuring that technological, institutional, physical and financial resources are available;

b) Building capacity of countries to monitor the state of their environment, economies and social and cultural institutions to meet their national priorities and international obligations;

c) Building core competencies;

d) Building the skills base and the techniques for use in decision-making;

e) Using regional and national experts for regional and national training in the context of SIDS-SIDS cooperation;

f) Improving in-country scientific and technical human resources through training especially at tertiary level;

g) Improving the capacity of civil society to enable them to fully contribute to sustainable development;

h) Establishing "centres of excellence" for training and applied research, within existing regional and national institutions as appropriate, and promoting cooperation between SIDS at the regional and inter-regional levels;

i) Development partners and the UN system shall assist SIDS to establish national capacity development coordination mechanisms to minimize the present uncoordinated approach to capacity development by 2005;

j) Development partners must collaborate with national donor coordination structures where appropriate by 2005; and

k) Establishing a dedicated SIDS capacity development fund, including the UNDP Capacity 2015 SIDS Programme.

70. Whilst access to education in SIDS has developed considerably over the last decade it is still a fundamental component of sustainable development and capacity building for the long term. In this regard education strategies and action plans that encompass the wide ranging needs for improved access to and quality of education need to be implemented.

SIDS seek support to further education for sustainable development through:

a) Strengthening Ministries of Education;
b) Promote more comprehensive universal primary education in all SIDS, with a major emphasis to reduce illiteracy;
c) Promote technical and vocational education, to enhance skills and facilitate entrepreneurship necessary in the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods;
d) Strengthening distance learning arrangements;
e) Integrate national sustainable development strategies within the education systems, with particular support from UNESCO and in the framework of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2015;
f) Assist with basic infrastructure, curriculum development and teacher training;
g) Assist with further development of programmes for people with special needs in particular children and youth, especially training at a regional level; and
h) Further strengthen the training and teaching of the principles and practices of good governance and civic values.

Sustainable production and consumption

71. In response to the call in the JPOI for the development of a 10-year framework of progress in support of regional and national initiatives on sustainable consumption and production, SIDS call for:

a) All initiatives relating to sustainable consumption and production to be considered in the context of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;
b) The creation of an appropriate institutional setting which will facilitate implementation of the 10-year framework on sustainable production and consumption in a coherent manner;
c) The need for programmes on sustainable consumption and production strategies to be assessed on the basis of national priorities and best practices; and
d) International cooperation to assist SIDS in the development of appropriate mechanisms to address the challenges associated with the design and implementation of regional and national sustainable consumption and production strategies.

National enabling environments

72. The international community must support the efforts of SIDS to strengthen enabling environments at the national level, as SIDS seek to:

a) Formulate and implement national sustainable development strategies by 2005 as agreed to in the JPOI;
b) Incorporate guiding principles of sustainable development into all sectoral policies;
c) Develop appropriate national targets and indicators for sustainable development, that can be incorporated into existing national data collection and reporting systems, in order to *inter alia* respond to the requirements of the MDGs and other relevant global and regional targets;

d) Improve legislative, administrative and institutional structures to develop and implemen sustainable development strategies, policies and plans and mainstream sustainabl development concerns into overall policy development and implementation and facilitate th participation of civil society in all sustainable development initiatives;
e) Create and empower sustainable development task forces, or their equivalent, to function a interdisciplinary and communally representative advisory bodies;
f) Rationalize legislation that affects sustainable development at the national level and improv coordination between legislative frameworks, and develop guidelines for those who must carr out legislative objectives;
g) Develop and implement integrated planning systems and processes; and
h) Involve youth in visioning sustainable island living.

Health

73. The strengthening and further development of SIDS-SIDS cooperation and experience sharing i the area of health is crucial and should be made a priority. Increasing incidence of health issues suc as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, drug resistant malarial strains, dengue, SARS, West Nile Virus, bird fl and other new and emerging diseases, and nutritional disorders, diabetes and other non-communicabl diseases and their impact on sustainable development is a major concern in SIDS.

74. Communicable and non-communicable diseases will continue to have a significant impact on th health of SIDS communities for the foreseeable future. Further, the experience of many regions ha shown that failure to effectively control diseases such as HIV/AIDS will have substantial negativ impacts on future sustainable development in all SIDS.

The international community should support the effective control of these diseases through:

a) Strengthening the health management and financing systems of SIDS to enable them to arres the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to reduce the incidence of malaria, dengue, non-communicabl diseases and mental health;
b) Enhanced accessibility to effective pharmaceutical drugs at affordable prices;
c) The active implementation of healthy public policy and effective prevention programmes i areas such as immunization, mental health, violence reduction and health education;
d) The development and implementation of effective surveillance initiatives at the national an regional level;
e) The facilitation of early information sharing on possible emerging outbreaks;
f) Preparedness of countries [and regional organizations] to respond rapidly and effectively t outbreaks, requiring development and regular testing of response plans, strengthening o response capacity and identification of resources which can be accessed quickly;
g) The development and implementation of modern, flexible national public health legislatio and
h) To promote the development of traditional medicines including medicinal plants;
i) The implementation of targeted environmental health programmes which prevent ill health o SIDS populations, such as waste management, control of air pollution and improved wat quality.

Knowledge management and information for decision making

75. SIDS recognize that there are new opportunities afforded by the rapid new developments in ICT to overcome limitations of isolation and remoteness and build their resilience. These new opportunities include areas such as e-commerce, improved early warning, telemedicine and distance learning. The international community should support SIDS to improve knowledge management and information for decision making at all levels through:

a) Identification and addressing of gaps in data and characterization of information related to economic, social, environmental and cultural areas;
b) Developing databases, vulnerability indexes, GIS and other information systems;
c) Establishing national and regional information and database centers, including the collection, quality control and use of meta-data, analysis of data, accessibility and sharing of data and information;
d) The expansion of the PARIS21 (Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century) Initiative to address SIDS concerns;
e) The establishment of an effective financial mechanism to implement the Digital Solidarity Agenda in SIDS, including connectivity and development and access to hardware and software that are affordable;
f) Addressing issues relating to cyber-security in SIDS;
g) Discussions on land resources in the last ten years have identified the difficulty for many SIDS to establish land-use databases, to assist in sustainable development planning. But most are impeded by a lack of financial and technical resources, and by inadequate training and access to remote sensing data;
h) In order to provide much needed expertise in these areas the capacity building exercises including additional and relevant research and post-graduate programs in geographic information systems (GIS), natural resource management and forestry science be introduced at interested SIDS regional tertiary level institutions.

76. Consideration should be given for the establishment of a task force to elaborate a resilience index, supported by the international community. This work would be significantly enhanced as a result of successful implementation of the activities outlined above.

Culture

77. SIDS recognize the importance of the cultural identity of people and its importance in advancing sustainable development and also recognize the need to develop cultural industries and initiatives, which present significant economic opportunities for national and regional development. Cultural industries and initiatives are viewed as an area in which SIDS have comparative advantage which have the potential to diversify SIDS economies and build their resilience while they adjust to changes in the global economy. The international community must therefore:

a) assist SIDS to develop and implement national cultural policies and legislative frameworks to support the development of cultural industries and initiatives in areas such as music, art, the literary and culinary arts, fashion, festivals, theatre and film, sports and cultural tourism;
b) assist SIDS to develop measures to protect the natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and increase resources for the development and strengthening of national and regional cultural initiatives;

c) assist SIDS to improve institutional capacity for advocacy and marketing of cultural products and the protection of intellectual property; and
d) make available venture capital and access to credit to small and medium cultural enterprises and initiatives, including through the establishment of culture support funds in SIDS regions.

Implementation

78. In order to support SIDS strategies for the further implementation of the BPOA, the following actions must be carried out:

a) Honoring of international commitments including the BPOA, the 1999 SIDS-Donor Meeting, 22nd Special Session of the UNGA, International Conference on Financing for Development, and the JPOI;
b) Collaboration between SIDS tertiary institutions for a consortium approach to capacity building and education, and standards setting for sustainable development in SIDS, supported by the international community;
c) Adoption by SIDS of common negotiating strategies in relevant fora;
d) Secure special status for SIDS as a group in international institutions and agreements, attaining differentiated treatments by multilateral institutions;
e) Promoting regional and inter-regional exchange of expertise and information as well as undertaking joint project and research activities;
f) Enhancing the generation and dissemination of information to support implementation of sustainable development is crucial. International support for a restructured SIDSNet, as well as its coordination with other relevant sustainable development networks will be necessary;
g) At the national level raising public awareness on the different dimensions of sustainable development and facilitate the participation of civil society in all sustainable development initiatives;
h) Review and update the project proposals tabled by SIDS at the 1999 SIDS-Donors Meeting and request the relevant UN agencies and regional inter-governmental organizations to assist in the analysis, and to secure means of financing viable projects by 2004;
i) Identifying new and innovative sources of funding to facilitate effective transfer of appropriate technologies, including through more effective engagement by regional development banks;
j) Develop SIDS-SIDS cooperation to explore options for insurance and reinsurance in the context of risk management and disaster recovery; and
k) Support for SIDS for capacity and institutional building for the mobilization of resources for sustainable development;
l) Assist SIDS in developing policies and capacity to ensure that foreign investment is conducive to sustainable development.

79. SIDS should ensure that partnerships for sustainable development deliver programs and projects for the implementation of the BPOA. This should include:

a) the commitment to a process that encompasses both transparency and inclusiveness of all stakeholders for the planning and implementation of programmes linked to existing international objectives for sustainable development;
b) the commitment to detailed proposals with clear timetables and arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress;

c) proposals that are supportive of the further implementation of the BPOA with firm commitments on funding and other resources; and
d) proposals that strengthen SIDS ability to leverage additional financial resources.

Access to financial resources

80. SIDS need assistance to enable them to fulfill their international obligations relevant to the attainment of sustainable development. Access of SIDS to international capital markets should be facilitated.

81. Developed countries must honor their commitment to contributing 0.7% GNP to ODA.

82. A substantial increase in ODA and other resources is required for SIDS to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

83. International community to support the establishment of specialized trust funds and investment facilities for SIDS, particularly in the areas of energy investment, disaster preparedness and mitigation, and capacity development.

84. Multilateral financial institutions should establish special SIDS-specific debt reduction criteria to alleviate the excessive levels of debt burden of many SIDS.

85. SIDS should utilize innovative financing mechanisms such as debt swaps, the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol, and micro-financing mechanisms.

Monitoring and evaluation

86. SIDS recognize the importance of regular and adequate monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the BPOA at the national, regional and international levels. This requires that the monitoring and evaluation infrastructure be build into the sustainable development strategies and be carried out against national targets. In order to ensure improved monitoring, evaluation and further implementation of the BPOA, sustainable development and to build resilience, the following means are proposed:

a) Enhanced international coordination related to SIDS

i) UN System

Strengthening of the SIDS Unit in UN DESA to enable it to fulfill its role as the inter-agency mechanism for continuing review, support, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the BPOA on a regular and predictable basis.

ii) Donor support

Promote harmonization of donor support among projects and programmes, and encourage donor coordination of strategies to enhance development effectiveness.

iii) Reduced reporting burden on SIDS

SIDS should have the flexibility to report jointly on implementation through simplified procedures.

b) Monitoring and periodic reporting on indicators on SIDS

Assignment of responsibility to UN DESA, through the inter-agency mechanism, to monitor work on indicators by SIDS, including indicators on environmental, social, economic and other factors, to enable the compilation of data to support future assessments on progress in the implementation of the BPOA.

c) Strengthening of regional SIDS institutions for monitoring and coordination

Regional SIDS institutions should play a key role in monitoring sustainable development implementation in SIDS and consider needs for technical assistance, elaboration of joint programs and capacity building. There should also be established a framework for SIDS-SIDS cooperation in reviewing the further implementation of the BPOA, as well as the strengthening or establishment of dedicated regional sustainable development coordination agencies or mechanisms in the SIDS regions. Greater coordination of SIDS IGOs is required in supporting the SIDS negotiating machinery to be established through the institutionalized AOSIS.

d) Conducting gender analysis on and periodic gender impact assessments of the BPOA and its implementation to ensure that the needs and interests of women and men are fully addressed.

Done at Nassau, Bahamas, 30 January 2004